Impact of price rise on common man

†*233. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have paid attention to the constant rise in the prices of foodgrains and other commodities along with its impact on the common man;

(b) the assessment of Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to control the price rise?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Annual inflation rate based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for the week ending February 18, 2006 for all commodities was 4.34 per cent against 4.89 per cent during the corresponding week last year (week ending February 19, 2005). The inflation rate for primary articles at 5.86 per cent was significantly higher than 0.71 per cent last year. A major part of increase in the primary articles is attributable to increase in the prices of food-grains, which was 7.26 per cent for the week ending on February 18, 2006 as against 1.29 per cent in the corresponding week of last year.

Government is concerned about the price increase of various essential commodities and undertakes measures as may be required to contain the same. The anti-inflationary policies of the Government in the recent past included fiscal and monetary discipline; rationalization of excise and import duties to lighten the burden on the poor; freeze on Central issue prices under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) for wheat and rice; import of wheat to augment supply in the Sourthen zone; and regular monitoring of retail and wholesale prices of essential commodities.

Losses due to cancellation of flights

*234. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that almost all the airlines are incurring heavy losses every year due to cancellation of flights because of heavy fog;

(b) if so, lthe number of flights cancelled due to fog during the last three years; and

(c) the estimated loss incurred by the airlines due to cancellation of flights during the above said period?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. Certain flights are cancelled or rescheduled in winter season due to fog.

(b) A total of 1754 flights of Indian Airlines and Alliance Air Ltd. and 24 flights of Air India (domestic leg) were affected/cancelled due to bad weather during the last three years.

(c) while profit/loss figures of the airlines are not maintained by the Government. Indian Airlines (including Alliance Air) have indicated an estimated loss of Rs.14 crores during the last three years due to cancellation of flights and jet airways have indicated an estimated loss of Rs. 25 crores during the last three years on this account.

Collection of Income Tax

*235. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an expenditure of Rs. 2.37 has to be incurred to collect Income Tax of Re.1/- by Government.

(b) if so, what is the justification for spending more money to collect less income tax; and

(c) the quantum of income tax collected during 2003-04 and 2004-05 and how much money was spent on collection of income tax?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) No Sir. As per the figures for financial year 2004-05, only 0.86 paise was incurred by the Government to collect one rupee of income tax (all direct taxes).

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

(c) The amount of income tax collected (all direct taxes) and the expenditure incurred during the period under reference are as under:—

Financial Year	Amount Collected	Expenditure on collection
2004-05	1,32,771 crore	1,138 crore
2003-04	1,05,088 crore	1,050 crore

Management of facilities at airports

*236. SHRI S.M. LAL JAN BASHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps proposed to bring about immediate improvement in passenger-amenities at Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad airports;